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Art. XIV.—Narrative of an Excursion from Pesháwer to Sháh-Báz Ghari

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presented me with the six yards of calico entirely covered with characters. It was manifest that the impressions had been very imperfectly taken, but I was ingenuously told by my agent that the task exceeded his ability, and required my own presence and superintendence; and that the impressions had been made at hazard in various spots to afford me an idea as to the extent of the Inscriptions. I now learned that they were of very considerable magnitude, which did not diminish my desire to be better acquainted with them. My young man reported favorably of the inhabitants, and brought me assurances from two or three of the Maleks, or petty chiefs, that they would be happy to see me.

In October, having decided on quitting Pesháwer, I considered that it first behoved me to do my best to take impressions and copies of these Inscriptions, and although we had tidings that Sirdár Saiad Mahomed Khan, the Dúrání chief of Hashtnagar, with his little army, was in the immediate vicinity of the place, and involved in hostilities with the people of the country, I would not allow prudential considerations to interfere with my purpose of ascertaining the nature of memorials, which could not fail to be of importance, from their being in the characters we find so prominent in the native legends of our Bactrian and Indo-Scythic coins.

Accordingly on the morning of the 16th of October, I left Pesháwer, attended by a native of that place, who officiated as guide, and two of my servants, all mounted. We crossed the Dasht Sakka, an extensive plain to the north of Pesháwer, commemorated in Afghan history by the battle fought in 1808 between Shah Sújah-al-Mulk and the Shazada Kaisar, and thence passing the village of Mír Gúzar, crossed at Landi, by a ferry, the river Nagumán. From this we proceeded to the river of Kábul, of which the preceding is but a branch, and crossed it also by a ferry at the point where the Jind river effects its junction. At the village of Paráng placed on its northern bank we took up our quarters for the night. The castle of Hashtnagar, picturesquely seated on an eminence, was distant about a mile and a half to the north, and separated from us by the course of the Jind, which winds round its eastern front. We occupied a musjid, finely shaded by some noble plane trees, and received the civil attentions of Malek Azzád Khán, the principal of the village, and of his people. Our party also gained an accession in the person of a young lad of the village, who was acquainted with the Yúsufzai districts, and volunteered to accompany us; as he was a good pedestrian, we suffered him to do as he wished. Paráng is inhabited by the Mahomedzai tribe of Afghans, and by computation is distant from Pesháwer seven

cosses (ten miles and a half) ; the distance to Hotti, the first village in the Yúsufzai country, is reckoned twelve cosses (eighteen miles). The latter distance is entirely over an uninhabited plain, extremely dangerous to traverse, from the predatory incursions of the surrounding tribes, of whom the independent and lawless Baizai tribes dwelling at the skirts of the hills to the north are most notorious. These depredators come mounted and in numbers, armed chiefly with spears. Many were the efforts of our village friends to dissuade us from crossing the plain with so small a party; and abundant were the conjectures as to our probable fate, and as to the figure we might cut, if we should have an encounter with the Baizai adventurers; however we were not to be diverted from our purpose, and recommending ourselves to the good wishes of our friends, we retired to rest, anxious for the morning, and the adventures the day might bring with it.

17th October.—At sunrise we were on our march, and our animals, like ourselves apparently invigorated by the cool healthy breeze of the morning, proceeded at a rapid pace. Our young lad of the village with trowsers tucked up and his shoes under his arm, kept steadily in front, and verified the promise he had made to keep pace with our horses. As we passed along the plain, its surface sprinkled with tufts of grass and diminutive bair bushes, we observed to our right and left many circular mounds, and we found that similar objects are interspersed not only throughout its extent, but generally over the Yúsufzai country: they are invariably strewed with fragments of pottery, and many of them have a well, as all of them probably once had, attached to them. Their vicinities are alike covered with pottery fragments, and in our progress we passed two or three spots overspread with the same humble indications of human industry: in one instance, we fell in our path, upon a buried earthen jar; I descended from my horse, and with our knives we dug around it, until we were satisfied it was a funeral jar of the ancient inhabitants of the country. I note this incident because it serves, in my opinion, to explain the nature of these *tumuli*, and would lead us to infer that they are ancient places of interment, or that they are kilns where funereal jars and other articles of pottery were fabricated.

As we advanced on the plain, the quantity of grass increased, until at length it entirely covered the surface, so that our road became merely an alley between it. About mid-way, we had to our right hand, nearly a mile from the road, on a large tumulus or mound called Do-Sir (the double-headed), a tower, denoting the location of a collector on the part of the Hashtnagar chief, who collects transit fees on the merchandise passing from the Yúsufzai districts and the

country west of Attok to Hashtnagar. At the eastern base of this mound were some fifteen or twenty huts. To our left, but distant four or five miles, alike conspicuously seated on a mound, was observed the inclosed village of Darghai, where also a collector of the Hashtnagar chief is stationed, who exacts transit fees on the merchandise passing between the Yúsufzai districts and Sohát. We were now entering what is esteemed the more dangerous part of the road, and had passed the limits of the jurisdiction of Hashtnagar. The grass was intensely thick, and attained the height of six or seven feet; we who were mounted could indeed look over it, and had around us the same unvaried view of one immense field of brown autumnal grass, extending to the base of the low black hills to the north, and to an undefined distance to the south, clouds having arisen over the Khattak hills which bound in that direction the great plain of Pesháwer; in front the same dull scene presented itself, but the Yúsufzai hills appeared in the distance, and among the grass we descried a large mound, which was apparently in our route. We soon neared the tumulus, and passing it immediately on our right, beheld peering above the waste of grass, a line of trees marking the boundary of the cultivated lands of the Yúsufzai, while the more prominent and lofty clusters pointed out the sites of Mirdán, Hotti, Túrú, Meyár, and other villages. We also distinctly beheld the low range of hills on which the inscribed rock is found, and the latter, my young man, who had visited it, would fain persuade me he recognised.

We soon reached Hotti, the first Yúsufzai village in this direction and inhabited by the Kamálzai tribe; we found it a large village of perhaps four hundred houses, and situated on the western bank of the Kála-páni rivulet (Black water), a small stream which after an inconsiderable course from the Baizai hills and defining the eastern limits of the Yúsufzais, falls into the Kábul river.

After some rest and refreshment we started for Sháh-Báz Ghari, the village nearest to the inscribed rock, which my young man had visited in his former trip. From Hotti its computed distance was four cosses (six miles). The road led through a thick grass jungle; half way we passed the village of Moab Banda, with about two hundred houses, and beyond it a copse of trees and zíarat, with an extensive old burial ground. We then gained the village of Ber Ghari of one hundred and fifty houses, placed on the western bank of the rivulet of Súdím or Sidim, and crossing the stream, which is inconsiderable as to magnitude, and flows like the Kála-páni in a sunken bed, entered on its eastern bank the village of Sháh-Báz Ghari, comprising about two hundred houses. These two neighbouring villages are

inhabited by the Amánzai tribe; the river separating them, joins the Kála-páni below Túrú. Sháh-Báz Ghari is a name derived from a fakír or mendicant saint of dissolute notoriety who formerly dwelt at this place, and it is said corrupted the morals of the people of the country, by inducing them to imitate his licentious example. The more correct or ancient name of the village is said to be Ler Ghari, in contradistinction to that of its opposite neighbour Ber Ghari, Ler and Ber being Pashto terms for Lower and Upper, and equivalent to the Persian Bála and Payín. These distinctive terms are much in use in the Afghan countries with reference to contiguous villages of the same name, but which generally have some physical line of separation between them.

We arrived at Sháh-Báz Ghari in excellent time, having still two or three hours of day-light. We enquired for Malek Derú, who by my young man's account was the principal Malek, and who had before received him with civility; in answer to my enquiries, some said, he was not at home; others said, he was. I directed the horses to be picketed for the night, willing to let it be seen, that whether the Malek favoured me with his presence or not, I did not intend that the circumstance should affect my stay. This done, I called my young man, who had before seen the Malek, and told him to take in his hand a lunghi which I had brought as a present from Pesháwer, and by going to his house, to ascertain whether he was there or not. The young man went; and in a few minutes appeared, evidently in great joy, Malek Derú, a little old man, with sharp twinkling eyes, somewhat however dimmed by age. His discovery that I was the Faringhi (European) he had before heard of, with the conviction that I had come on no mission prejudicial to himself or to his village, gave him confidence and satisfaction, increased moreover by the acceptable present of the lunghi.

The Malek placed his son and nephew at the disposal of my people, to await their commands, and to assist them in procuring whatever might be needed; he was incessant in his attentions, and gave me much of his company. Towards night many of the other Maleks of the village assembled around us, and our conversation naturally enough turned upon the stone, or khán, as they called it. I found, that in the singular state of society which here existed, a Malek was appointed by every ten or twelve families, who had a voice in consultations on the affairs of the village; and that the most respected was decidedly my friend Malek Derú, both from seniority and wisdom, as well as affluence. I ascertained too, that he had influence beyond his village and tribe, and generally throughout the

Yúsufzai country. As to the stone, I was told that many attempts had been made to take impressions from it, for the Faringhis; and that only a day or two before, Badínáth, a Hindú, had visited it on behalf of M. Court, and that the same man had taken away with him a marble slab with a Persian Inscription, from a Musjid at Kote. To my inquiries, as to whether they had any tradition respecting the stone and inscription, they answered, that they believed the latter to have been written by Sháh BáZ Kalendar. The greatest good will prevailed, and although it was very late before the company broke up, we had arranged everything so as to commence our labours upon the stone in the morning, by procuring some implements in addition to those we had brought with us, and by engaging two or three of the villagers to assist us. My young man, on his former visit, had removed some of the moss which had grown over the greater part of the surface of the rock, and had discovered characters beneath it; to perfect this process and to develop the entire inscription was clearly our first course, and for it we prepared.

18th October.—Early in the morning we repaired to the stone, which was distant about one thousand yards from the village, and lying about mid-way up the ascent of a small ridge of hill, at the point where it subsides into the plain. [Plate I]. There is an idea that it has fallen from above; if so, it would account for the superior rock being intercepted by an inferior fragment at a point among the lower lines of the large inscription and thereby concealing a few of the characters. It is manifest this juxtaposition and contact of the two rocks must have taken place since the inscription was engraved, or the characters affected by it could not have been inserted. A glance at the surface of the rock convinced me that my journey would be recompensed, and our people speedily set to work to remove the moss which obscured the principal inscription. [Plate II]. This was found on the northern face of the rock, and it was with much satisfaction I found the southern face had also its inscription. The surface of the rock did not appear to have been artificially formed or fashioned, but its tolerably smooth and even aspect was entirely owing to natural fracture. Many of the fragments of rock about the sides of the hill, and at its skirts, had fronts as well calculated to receive a graven record as the one which bore them, and they are all of the same rock, mineralogically considered, an arenaceous argillaceous compound. On looking direct at the inscription, it was evident that the upper lines were formed of characters a little larger and more carelessly fashioned than those of the lower lines; the lines were also more apart from each other than the

latter ones; in all probability these deviations were due to the greater irregularity of surface. On the opposite side too, the upper lines of the smaller inscription there, were liable to the same observation. The lines moreover were not continuously straight, being carried out in an undulating course, as if the engraving had been influenced by the inflections of surface, which has produced a confused appearance, and was embarrassing when I wished to trace many of the lines throughout their full extent. Two or three horizontal fissures also occurred, which alike disturbed the clear course of the lines, one of which nearly traversed the whole breadth of the rock. M. Court's inscription was in a corner of the superior face, and separated from the great inscription by a perpendicular fissure: it was obvious, both from position and the style of the characters that this inscription was a distinct one. Here then were no less than three inscriptions in genuine Bactro-Pali characters. It may be conceived, I possessed sufficient inducement to encourage my companions to exertion, and that I willingly lent a hand to effect the removal of the moss. This was not so difficult a matter, we discovered, as to cleanse the rock from the green and slimy stains occasioned by the damp of ages. Nearly the whole day was expended in these labours, and after we had fairly succeeded, we passed over the surface a covering of prepared ink, as the preliminary to taking an impression on calico in the morning. This done we made our way to the village.

19th October.—Betimes we repaired to the rock, and having renewed the application of ink to the surface, we commenced the task of taking an impression. For this object, I had brought a large quantity of paper, of the stoutest fabric of Pesháwer, and twenty-five yards of fine British calico, which I had hoped from the representations of my young man would have sufficed for two impressions. We soon found that the paper would not answer the purpose, and it was plain that we had calico enough only for one impression; this however was effected, and constituted the labour of the day. The toil was great, as it was necessary to employ the palm of the hand, and forcibly too, to enable the gently moistened calico to accommodate itself to the irregular surface of the rock, and to produce the outlines of the characters. Of our success we could judge by the external appearance of the impressed calico, which on a black ground showed the characters precisely as they stood upon the rock, but as so many blank spaces. I was not altogether satisfied with the result, though as a first attempt, and the first impression that had ever been taken, it was still a tolerable effort. Having disposed of the superior inscription, we found that difficulties more serious than we could surmount, prevented us from

repeating the process on the inscription at the opposite side. The lower part of the rock, on which it is engraved, slopes inwardly, while the soil on which it rests inclines outwardly, thereby forming an angle too acute to permit the free use of the arms. After fruitless endeavours to effect our purpose here also, I found that I must be contented to carry off a copy only.

As I purposed to devote the morrow to taking copies of the inscriptions by sight, we this evening exercised the ingenuity of the village smith in preparing half a dozen sharply pointed instruments, that we might the better trace and cleanse the channels of the letters. He converted for our use as many files, which he chanced to possess; and before we went to sleep, gave them to us prepared and tempered.

20th October.—At sunrise we were again at the stone, and with our new implements employed in clearing the letters of the inscription. After completing this part of our labours, we traced the letters on the rock with sharp angular pieces of a somewhat soft stone which we found in abundance around us. As the marks left by these stones were white, while the surface of the rock originally dark, had necessarily been considerably deepened in colour by the coverings of ink we had passed over it, the effect when the operation was terminated, was to ourselves surprising, and to our friends the villagers, little short of magical. They loudly expressed their feelings, affirming that they never had a notion that the entire stone was covered with writing, their knowledge having been confined to the obvious inscription of M. Court. They fully agreed with me that the Khán was a wonderful Khán, and that Sháh-Báz Kalendar was a cunning fellow, first to cover the stone with writing, and then to conceal the writing under moss.

In taking copies of the inscriptions, which was not done without difficulty from the waving and confused course of the lines, the young lad from Paráng proved serviceable to me, by guiding the end of a slender and long stick over the letters as I copied them, and by shifting it as I directed him. Towards evening, I had completed my copies of the three inscriptions, but after the pains that had been taken in clearing and bringing out the characters, I could not but regret being unprovided with fine calico, that I might take another impression of the superior inscription, under the advantages which would not fail to attend it. With little probability of success, but anxious that no attempt should be untried, I directed my young man to send for horses from the village, and to ride over with the Malek's son to Kote, and ascertain whether by chance, any calico could be procured among the

Hindú traders of the bazaar. During the day, I had essayed how far the coarse cotton fabric of the country would serve to bear an impression, but it had not answered. My young man returned from Kote, and to my great satisfaction presented me with twenty-seven yards of excellent British calico; a wonderful piece of good fortune; how so costly an article had found its way into the bazaar of a Yúsufzai village, I could scarcely account for; but its possession made me happy, and with light hearts we returned to supper and to rest at the village.

21st October.—By sunrise this morning we were anew occupied by taking a fresh impression of the large inscription. At noon, we heard the reports of cannons and small arms, which continued more or less sustained until afternoon, from which we inferred that Sirdár Saiad Mahomed Khán and his opponents had met in mortal conflict. We did not on their account remit our labours, but completed our impression in a manner, if not perfect, at least more satisfactory than the former one.

22nd October.—This day was spent at the stone, in completing our observations on it, and in the evening we retired to the village, with the intention of starting for Pesháwer in the morning.

23rd October.—Two or three hours before daylight our horses were saddled, and we were ready to start. Malek Derú and the man he had commissioned to accompany us to Pesháwer were also ready. I was unable, although he was suffering from ague, to dissuade the Malek from attending us on the road, and urged to no purpose that it was ague day; I was also unable to send him back after he had proceeded a reasonable distance; he would and did keep us company until we reached the Kála-páni rivulet, being determined, he said, not only to see us safe in his own limits, but beyond them; we parted after a good deal of embracing, and I hoped the good old man would be able to reach his village before the ague fit came on. He must have been above seventy years of age; but he was hale, and on horseback active. Riding this morning on a mare, followed, as is the practice, by the foal, he dashed among the high jungle grass with great spirit and satisfaction, and was much pleased when I familiarly addressed him as Bai Derú, and alluded to the exploits of his youthful days.

We crossed the Kála-páni at daylight, and without halting at Hotti, committed ourselves to the plain before us. On nearing the mound before noted as between Hotti and Do Sir, we descried in the distance, but approaching us, a number of spears rising above the grass. They might be in hostile or in friendly hands, but we had only to encounter what happened as well as we could; we therefore

marched firmly on, taking care to keep well together. The spearmen gradually advanced, and as they came closer we observed a multifarious assemblage of men and animals; on our meeting them, we found many engaged in extinguishing the matches of their fire-arms, which by way of precaution they had lighted when they first beheld our party; they were a káfila from Sohát, bringing grain laden on bullocks. We kept on our journey, and without farther rencontre reached Paráng. The Malek's man was unable to keep farther pace with our horses; and we left him to pass the night there, and to make his way leisurely to Pesháwer the next day. For ourselves, we resolved to proceed at once to Pesháwer; therefore dropping a present into the hand of the young lad who had accompanied us to Sháh-Báz Ghari, we crossed the river, and, by the road we had come, made for the city, which we reached a little before sunset; and took up quarters at the Bágh-i-Vazír (the Vazír's garden), from which we had started on our trip.

The following day Malek Derú's man joined us, and after allowing him due rest, we made over to him a Korán, a lunghi, a postinchi, and two pairs of shoes, the articles desired by the Malek, and due to his civility; in addition we made over a few sundries which we judged would be acceptable; due to our own friendly feelings, and to show to him and to his people that attention and courtesy were appreciated, as well as to secure a welcome reception for myself, in case I should again wander that way, and that the traveller who may hereafter visit Sháh-Báz Ghari should have no reason to complain that I had preceded him. These duties acquitted, a lunghi was bound around the messenger's head and we dismissed him to rejoin his master.

THE SEPARATE TABLET

7D 4Y 727D Y7W V 8E 57Y
 4Y 7Y 377X 7P 5Y 7Y 7P 5Y 7Y 7P
 17Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y
 7K 7P 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y
 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y 7Y

THE ALPHABET.

A. I. U. E. O. Am. K. Kh. G. Ch. Chh. J.
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Ñ. T. D. Dh. N. T. Th. D. Dh. N. P. Ph. B.
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Bh. M. Y. R. L. V. S. Sh. S. H. St.
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The vowel a is inherent in the consonants; the other vowels, anuswara, and r, are made by little strokes. I is drawn downwards crossing some line of the consonant: as ॐ ki, ॐ ti, ॐ si, ॐ sti; U turns towards the left below, as ॐ su, ॐ ku, ॐ hu; E is made by a stroke above, as ॐ se, ॐ se ÿñe; O passes downwards, but does not cross any line: as ॐ bho, ॐ yo, ॐ so; Anuswara is made by two strokes at foot: as ॐ kan, ॐ san; R is a stroke towards the right: as ॐ tra, ॐ sra Sometimes two such marks are found together: as ॐ pri, ॐ pur, ॐ kram.